Louis Lafata – Free response Questions

Who is "normal?" What is "normalcy"? How is it a problem in the world around you?

- “Normalcy” is something that is defined by dominant culture. People who in some way diverge from the “norm,” can be considered disabled. This divergence from the norm is basically defined as someone who fluctuates beyond the assumptions of what a person should be.

What are some of the issues that surround disability oppression on campus? In your life?

- Some issues that surround disability are the many buildings on the Syracuse University campus that are either non-accessible or not easily accessible. Also, the oppression that occurs on a daily basis against disabled people is something that I recognize in my daily life.

How do we typically think of disability? What does it mean to redefine or re-imagine disability from a medical construct to a social, political, and cultural one?

- Simi Linton argues that society should create a new definition of what disability really is. She strives to rid of the medical definition of disability and form it into one that is a social /political/cultural. One can work to redefine the definition of disability by breaking away from the confines of dominant culture’s beliefs.

How does disability intersect with race, class, sexuality & gender? How does disability interface with technology, space, buildings, music, art, fashion, and culture?

- With class, disability is heavily affected because of the fact that people with disabilities that are wealthy can afford the latest technology to facilitate their life, while those on the poorer side of the spectrum are left to fend more for themselves. Universal design is also a major issue in society with respect to mobility and accessibility issues.

How is disability used as a vehicle to challenge conventional notions of beauty, the body?

- Disability can be used to challenge conventional notions through the delineation of people with disabilities as being just as beautiful as those who are able bodied.

What are some interfaces between (dis)ability and technology? How does technology help us re-imagine the ability/disability binary?

- Technology can help to make the binary between disability and ability smaller because technological innovations can help improve the lives of the disabled by increasing their mobility or other ways of life.

How might the redefining of disability manifest in your field? Which definitions of disability are deployed in the discourse communities and disciplines through which you circulate?

-In my field, the redefinition of disability could manifest in engineering through the incorporation of universal design and access. If I were to design a structure, making sure that the disabled could access the structure just as easily as one without a disability would be a prominent goal.

Where are locations of (medical, cultural, social, historical) disability around you?

Disability in Syracuse is located anywhere where someone cannot complete a daily task or carry out a normal routine.

What can you identify that is problematic around you? What can you critique?

-In the Syracuse University community, there are several buildings such as Carnegie Library, Sims Hall and Link Hall that do not have apparent entrances for those in wheelchairs or are otherwise disabled. The engineering building, Link Hall, has steps at both entrances, both outside and inside, so it is difficult to enter. Carnegie library has no apparent wheelchair accessibility, and Sims hall requires people with wheelchairs to enter through the basement. These are all examples of problems in the community that nee to be addressed.